

# American Rabbit Journal

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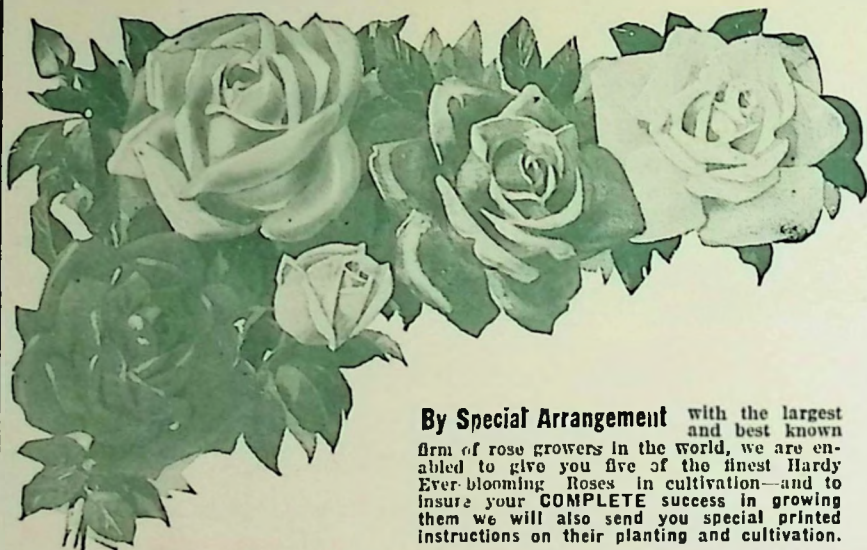
By the EDITOR

**JANUARY 1932**



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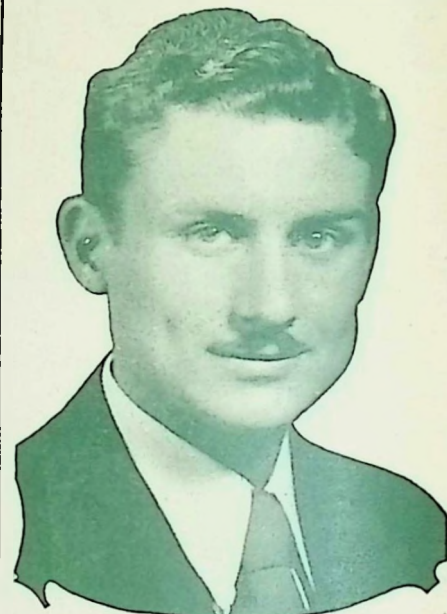
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## The Reason Rabbits Should Have a Pedigree

*Why Such a Record Is Necessary to the Rabbit Breeder — How It Effects Future Rabbit Operations — What It Should Cover to be of Most Value — No Mystery to Record Keeping — Equipment Required for Efficient Records*

By M. C. MURRAY

**W**HAT is a pedigree? A pedigree is a record of the ancestors of the rabbit (or any other animal) for which it is made. In order to be of any real value, it should trace back on the parentage of both sire and dam three or more generations accurately and minutely; the more generations the better.

The original idea of a pedigree was the desire to trace descent from some noted or pure-blood ancestor or ancestors. The principle underlying this idea is that fundamental law of breeding that, "like produces like", and therefore an authentic pedigree is in itself a guarantee of superiority. A good pedigree should enhance the value of a rabbit in proportion to the number of ancestors that have been prize winners in the showroom, and to the number of ancestors that have superior records of performance in the breeding pens. Since it costs more to produce pedigreed stock than unpedigreed (some will differ on this point), it is but right that the value of a rabbit with a good pedigree should be greater than one with no pedigree or record of past performance of ancestors.

The objects of a pedigree, or the things that should be shown by a pedigree, are four-fold. They are: (1) To enable one to trace lineage; (2) to furnish a record of the ancestors; (3) to furnish a guarantee as to the breeding, whether purebred, cross bred, or line bred; and (4) to show the record of the ancestors in the show room and also in the breeding pen.

The longer a pedigree is the more valuable it becomes in tracing lineage, and as such it is of much greater value to the breeder in making selections for mating;

that is, providing the true records of the ancestors in the breeding pen have been carefully preserved and shown on the pedigree. Excellence in ancestry is much more important in the near ancestors than in the remote parentage, because the influence exercised by the near ancestry is greater than that from the remote. The influence of the sire is greater than that of the grand-sire or the great grand-sire.

Of course it is conceded that a crooked breeder can manufacture a good looking pedigree, but it would be hard to escape detection. The reason for this is that a greater percentage of breeding stock is being registered every year, and a pedigree will of necessity have to be correct and can hardly be faked if it traces back to supposedly registered ancestors. Registrations can easily be checked by writing to the registration headquarters. However, the greatest majority of our breeders today are men and women of integrity and deal with their customers fairly.

No breeder of either fancy or commercial stock should neglect to keep a correct record of all breedings so that he can make an accurate pedigree of any rabbit he raises. If he does not do this because of the demand of the fancy for the show room, he should do so for his own guidance in the matter of intelligent breeding. And since the greatest profit can be made only from standard varieties when bred for meat and fur, it is all the more necessary that correct records of performance and ancestry be kept from which it will be possible to deduce the best matings. Commercial breeders can not deny the importance of knowing the potential qualities of a rabbit in their breeding pen. Will a doe produce



enough meat to make a profit above her keep? Is she from a line that are heavy milkers and capable of raising six to seven youngsters to proper weight at eight weeks? These are a few of the questions that can be answered by deduction from the well-kept pedigree. And there is no denying the value of such knowledge to the man who is trying to make a living raising meat rabbits; one or two does that are poor performers can easily spoil the income sheet, and possibly they could have been eliminated if their past history is at hand.

An individual specimen can easily be judged by the qualities and external points it possesses because they are not hard to recognize by one who knows what they ought to be; but unless one has a record of the breeding of the rabbit and its lineage, there is no way of telling about its possibilities as a breeder. Sometimes the prize winner at a show is worthless as a breeder; it is just a "happen so." Perhaps it was one good specimen from a litter of culls from an inferior doe. But if a prize winner has a pedigree showing several ancestors that were prize winners, or at least standard specimens of a breed with a good lineage record, it will be safe to use the specimen for breeding purposes if mated to one having similar characteristics as to lineage, etc.

As I have said before in this article, it is just as important to keep these records if you are raising rabbits for meat and fur as it is for the fancier who raises stock for exhibition purposes. It is just as necessary that you know the breeding of every rabbit you own, whether you sell for meat and fur or for breeding stock, in order that your matings can be made wisely. If you are growing rabbits for meat, you want a quick growing rabbit; also you want does that will have large litters and can raise them. So your record should show: the number in the litter, the weight of litter at 21 days, date of weaning, age at which they are suitable for market, condition of doe at weaning time, and ease of breeding. For meat purposes, it is desirable to have large litters. An ideal doe for this purpose should be able to care for eight youngsters and raise four litters a year. The weight of the litter at 21 days will give a pretty good idea of the milk capacity of the doe. The doe that raises nice, plump, quick growing litters is the one that will make the profit, and also the one from which to save breeding stock so as to improve a strain.

It is just as important that the buck be from a litter that shows the best market type as it is for the doe. This is obvious as the buck is half the herd, or at least he is credited with half the influence on the progeny. So it is easy to see that selections of both bucks and does for breeding purposes should be made in the same manner—from their records of ancestry, the past performance of this ancestry, and this from an accurate pedigree. If this method is followed conscientiously by breeders in the future, they will see their profits increase whether it be fancy or commercial stock they are breeding.

There is no mystery to keeping records, nor is there anything hard about it. It will be necessary to purchase a tattoo outfit, some hutch cards, record books, and pedigree blanks, though, if you would do it right. Every breeding rabbit should have a number tattooed in the left ear and a card to correspond to this number fastened to its hutch. On this card will be the nota-

tions which will later be transferred to a permanent record book, and from there to the pedigree. This record book then will tell the breeder just what he wants to know about his rabbitry; it shows at almost a glance which does are making a profit, which does are losing money, and which of the bucks are the best one to keep. By this method it is possible to discard the poor breeders and raise the replacement stock from the better breeders; subsequently such selection will manifest itself in a strain of very profitable meat and fur rabbits.

For fancy or standard bred stock, the pedigree should show the ability of the ancestors as breeders, as well as their ability to win prizes, for both sire and dam. It should also show the number of uniformly colored or standard specimens in a litter and the number of culls or disqualified stock.

The rabbit that traces back several generations to ancestors that raised large litters of uniform, standard stock is much more valuable as a breeder than one which has no such record of performance. By all means let the pedigree show the value of a rabbit as a breeder, because it is just as important as the fancy points that win prizes and will soon be required.

Hutch cards are necessary for both does and bucks. And both cards are the same at the top with the hutch number first, the name second, and the number of the occupant next; but here the doe's card differs from that of the buck in that it has nine vertical columns of about the same width and a tenth at the right somewhat wider for "remarks." Beginning at the left, the columns should be headed as follows: Bred—Tested—Kindled—Number in Litter—Number Bucks—Number Does—21 day weight—Weaned—Weight at Weaning time. There should be four horizontal lines across these columns dividing them into four equal spaces which will keep the record for a doe for one year. For the buck's card, there need be only three columns of similar width and the fourth somewhat wider for "remarks." In the first column should be entered the name and number of the doe served, the date bred in the second, and the date tested in the third. Under "remarks" should be noted anything about the ease or difficulty of breeding, or any other information that will help the record.

The notes on the hutch card should be transferred to the record book regularly so that you will not get behind with the record and tend to neglect it. It is the little things that are really the most important, and surely records and authentic pedigrees are highly important. So if you take care of the little details, the big things are practically done already or will take care of themselves.

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# When a Fellow Needs Advice

**George Tells a Small Boy a Few Things About the Rabbit Business — What He Should Start Out With, Where He Should Buy, and What He Should Feed**

By J. CARROLL KUHN

THE sun was just beginning to get above the tree tops and the morning air was so invigorating that George did not notice the young fellow who appeared at the upper end of the rabbitry closest to the drive. He might have been fourteen—but twelve would have been closer to correct. When George did happen to look to the further end of the long row of hutches (one of several rows) he discovered the lad regarding the animals in the nearest hutches with longing eyes.

"Hello there, son," called out George, "how are you this fine morning?"

"All right, hello," the boy said a little timidly.

And when George got close enough he could see the brown eyes were a little frightened, but they were bright; and the dark hair was well clipped and his cap neatly placed. It was evident he was interested in rabbits from the curiosity he displayed, and George gathered from his appearance that he was an ambitious lad. The fact that he was up and about so early proved this latter deduction.

"I'd like to see your rabbits," continued the boy after a while. "Dad said I could buy some—we just live up the street. My name is Ted Willis—I'm John Willis' boy."

"Glad to show them to you, Ted; maybe I'll have something you'll want."

They started down the row of hutches nearest to them, George remarking about this rabbit and then that and Ted had forgotten his timidity and was all eyes.

"Oh, look at that one washing his face! And what cute little babies!" exclaimed Ted going from one rutch to another excitedly and gaining more confidence as he went along.

George was amused at the boy's enthusiasm. He remembered not so many years ago when he was just such an eager kid; He remembered the scrub femish he had—the multi-colored offspring they produced. Inwardly he smiled as he recalled those happy days of his later childhood. He had been as proud of those first rabbits as he was now of his highly touted prize-winners. Perhaps they had meant more.

"Know anything about rabbits?" asked George casually.

"I've been reading quite a lot. They say you can easily make from \$2000 to \$5000 a year from a few rabbits. We've got some circulars and catalogs from a company at home that say they will buy all we can raise—and they will pay \$2.00 to \$5.00 each for them."

"Yes?"

"And they tell you how to build the hutches and what to feed them—they say anything a cow will eat is good to feed rabbits."

"I know," remarked George half to himself.

"And they say they have the best stock you can get in the country; for \$55 we can get two does and a buck."

"That so?" queried the other, also remembering a past experience of more recent date than reminiscences of a few minutes before.

"They say there's only one breed of rabbits that are really money makers—Chinchillas—say, aren't these Chinchillas? I knew they were! What beauties; I've decided I'll buy Chinchillas. Dad said he'd pay for them and I could pay him back out of my paper money and what I make out of odd jobs."

"Chinchillas are a good rabbit, Ted; but don't let anyone tell you they are the only rabbit that will make money. The fact is, my boy, you don't want Chinchillas. Not yet! If you want to make money you'd better not start with this breed until you get older and understand a lot more about rabbits."

"Why?" asked the boy disappointedly.

"Well, I'll tell you. To make money in this game you've got to sell all you raise—and that before they grow up and eat their heads off. I'm afraid your company you speak of would not take every rabbit you raised, and when they did take them you would have kept them so long your feed bill would be more than you could make out of them. All rabbits won't make good breeding stock—the culls must be sold for meat. If you're going to make a profit out of meat, rabbits must be sold at weaning age. The idea is to have a rabbit that will weigh around  $3\frac{3}{4}$  to 4 pounds at this time and will dress out approximately two pounds or over."

"Won't Chinchillas do that?"

"Maybe in the hands of an experienced breeder—but even then they fall a little short. What you want is a rabbit that will weigh from  $9\frac{3}{4}$  to 11 pounds at maturity and one that you are sure will breed true to color. For a boy like you though, Chinchillas would not be a good rabbit to start with."

"Then what would be the best?"

"Some white breed I should say—New Zealand Whites, White Flemish, American Whites or White Beaverns. But I would prefer the New Zealand Whites as they will reach the weights I have just mentioned. They are a good all round, all purpose breed, and they don't get so large and eat so much as do the Flemish."

"But why White—they aren't as pretty as the Chinchillas." The boy hated to have his dreams tumble.

"Chinchillas are a beautiful rabbit—but would you believe it if I told you sometimes I don't get a single rabbit out of a litter I would want to keep as a breeder. Of course more often I do, but I've been breeding this strain for several years and know how to mate my does to get what I want."

"Then you think I could breed whites all right?"

"Yes, with whites you don't have to bother about

color. All you have to do is watch type—and of course take the proper care of them."

"If you were me how would you start?"

"Now I don't want you to think I'm trying to sell you stock, if you've already made up your mind, though I'll tell you what I would do if I were you. I would buy two good does from some breeder who would guarantee them and who would breed them for me when they were old enough. For instance, I have some nice does here now that are ready to breed. If you bought them from me I'd breed them for you to White Flash, the best buck I have. That would save you having to feed a buck until you found out whether you wanted to be a big rabbit breeder or not. Furthermore I'll breed your does for you no matter who you get them from."

"How much should I pay for good stock?"

"That depends, Ted. I have these here that I can have registered and which I will guarantee for \$10 each. And I'll wager they are better than those you'd get for \$20 or \$25 from that company you were telling me about. If you didn't like them, you could bring them back; but you couldn't very well hope to ship them back to some company a thousand miles away."

"That's right," said Ted. "I'll have to talk to dad about it and bring him over to see your rabbits."

"That's fine—and while you're here you might as well see how I take care of my rabbitry. Have you a place to keep rabbits?"

"No—not yet. I have some boxes that I thought might do for a while."

"Well you'd better build a hutch something like mine, two or three tiers high and two units long with hay racks between. This will give you four or six pens and it won't be long before you'll need them. I use a self-cleaning hutch, see? The floor slants toward the back and there is a five inch strip of  $\frac{5}{8}$  by  $\frac{5}{8}$  hardware cloth over an opening at the back to allow the droppings to fall through on a galvanized shute."

"How big do you make each unit?"

"The proper dimensions for each unit is about four feet long, thirty inches deep, and twenty-four inches high. Rabbits should have plenty of room and plenty of light, and above all they must be kept sanitary. I use this little brush to brush out each hutch every morning—I never allow litter or waste of any kind to accumulate in the corners. About once a week or every two weeks I remove the rabbit from each compartment and disinfect the hutch with a good disinfectant, being sure to get in all the cracks and crevices. This last may not seem important, but it is a good cheap insurance against coccidiosis, a serious disease in rabbits caused from uncleanness."

"Where is the best place to put my hutch—I mean which way should it face?"

"That also depends. Rabbits should never be exposed directly to the sun's rays because in summer they will suffer intensely. On the other hand, they should have some sun light. I face mine toward the South, and these trees give my hutches plenty of shade in the afternoon when the days are hottest."

"What do you feed your rabbits mostly?"

"I use several different feeds. Sometimes I use prepared rabbit feeds, such as pellets, mashers, balanced rations, etc. But for the most part I like to mix my

own feeds for some of my best stock. They each have different requirements and a commercial feed isn't always exactly what I want. Generally though, I always feed alfalfa hay (this mostly in the evenings) and I vary the diet by feeding whole oats one day, rolled barley the next, cracked corn or cracked wheat the next—and maybe a balanced ration from all these for the next day. Of course if I am feeding for a specific result I will feed more of one of these feeds than of the others. I either keep a salt spool in every hutch or mix a little salt with the mashers. Once in a while I use Cod Liver oil and mineral feeds—I should use these more often, too."

"What does Cod liver oil and minerals do for rabbits? Are they very important?"

"Some breeders think so—others don't; but it is not always possible for a rabbit kept in a small hutch to get all the minerals and vitamins that are essential to his proper growth. By feeding Cod Liver oil and minerals you give your rabbits the necessary elements to construct tissue and bones, and to regulate his system, in a concentrated form. There are in fact so many things to feed, and methods of feeding, that you'd better get you a good book and follow it until you learn what you should feed and what you should not."

"Do you ever feed them grass or clover?"

"Yes, but never too much at one time. Rabbits should have some green feed both summer and winter, at least three times a week and oftener if possible. They don't drink so much water when fed greens, but you should never forget to water twice each day regardless."

"Guess all this is a lot to remember at first," sighed Ted.

"No it isn't—it just seems a lot; it's a lot of fun and comes to you soon if you like your rabbits. You'll just seem to know what you should do for your bunnies—that they would like to have a little twig of peach or willow or some other tree to sharpen their teeth on and to keep them from eating the hutch; you'll also learn not to pick a rabbit up by his ears if you don't want to have his ears broken or have him scratch you. It's better to pick them up by the loose skin back of the ears and at the same time holding the tips of the ears under the palm of the same hand."

"So you wouldn't buy from the company I told you about?"

"No, Ted, I wouldn't if I were you. They may have awfully good stock, but I'd buy from some one I knew; I wouldn't buy a buck, as I have already said, until I was certain I wanted to continue with rabbits; and if the does are guaranteed then you can exchange them if they fail to breed thereby saving money and disappointment both. Do you see?"

"Yes, I believe I do."

"I tell you what I'll do," said George. "If you want to start in soon, I'll arrange my work so that I can help you build your hutch next week so you'll get started right. I want to see that it is good and strong and I will protect the rabbits from marauders—I wouldn't want dogs to clean you out as they did me one time."

"All right," said Ted pleased. "I'm sure after dad sees your rabbits he'll let me buy from you. It's about time for me to go to school now, so I'll have to be going. Good-bye and thanks for showing me around."

# The Albinorex Variety of Rabbits

## *Its Genetics and Standard of Perfection—Setting Forth the Argument for the Adoption of a Single Name for All White, Pink-eyed Rabbits of the Rex Mutation*

BY R. L. TREWEEKE

EVERY red or pink-eyed rabbit owes its whiteness to an arrangement within its reproductive cell structure caused by the presence of inheritance factors representing the Albino mutation. These factors restrict the color possessed by the ancestors, before the Albino mutant stamped his tendencies upon their progeny, and consequently no pigmentation occurs. Even the eyes are colorless. Light rays, passing through them, strike against the arteries and capillaries which supply blood to the retina and, reflecting into the eyes of the observer, give him the impression that the pupils of the specimen's eyes are red. In reality he is seeing the color of the rabbit's blood, through its colorless eyes, for no color pigment is present in the retina of an Albino.

When the fur structure of a common rabbit is acted upon by combination with the factors which control the Rex mutation, the result, in the second filial generation, is the production of a proportion of offspring having awnless or Rex fur. Such rabbits, irrespective of their origin, are representative of the Rex breed. They should not be misconstrued to be of some other breed, in whole or in part. Nor should they be considered as hybrids, bearing the elements of Rex and some other breed in unison, and capable of being properly designated by a hyphenated word such as New Zealand Rex, for example. A rabbit either belongs in the Rex breed or in some normal-furred breed. It can not be part Rex and part something else. The Rex mutation is heritable independently of color. So, rabbits of the Rex breed may be of any color common to domestic rabbits. The color of a Rex Rabbit determines the subdivision or color variety of the Rex breed to which that specimen belongs. If it is brown, it is a Brownrex. If it is blue, it is a Bluerex.

If a Rex rabbit is white and has red or pink eyes, it is an Albinorex. And it is high time for breeders to come to some proper understanding of this matter. Attempts are being made to distract attention from the fact that every pink-eyed white Rex is an Albinorex and should be classified as such. Attempts are being made to subdivide the variety by suggesting to breeders such names as White Rex, Erminorex, New Zealand White Rex, Polish Rex, White Flemish Rex, etc. What purpose can such inappropriate and hybrid names serve? What good can possibly come from splitting the Albinorex variety into half a dozen portions, each having a misleading name? Indeed, much needless confusion and harm may come from it.

In order that it may have a sound commercial foundation, rabbit culture needs to be simplified and unified. Simplification of standards and differentiation among breeds and varieties is a step in the right direction. Just consider the present jumble for a moment: The simple Albinorex variety split up into half

a dozen sub-varieties, each having a nonsensical and meaningless name and each sponsored by a different group of breeders, calling themselves a specialty club and trying to call their split portion of the Albinorex color variety a breed. Think of it, trying to call a portion of a variety a breed. What a monument to colossal stupidity!

Take the name of Erminorex, for example. Obviously such a name was chosen for promotional purposes, to create some sort of illusion comparing the fur of the so-called Erminorex rabbit with real Ermine fur. Now, anybody who has seen Ermine fur knows that it bears no close resemblance to Rex fur. Ermine fur contains a large proportion of distinct, protruding guard-hairs and lies flat to the hide. Rex fur stands upright and, when properly produced, contains no protruding hairs. A blind man would have no difficulty distinguishing one from the other. The only similarity is the name. The comparison is odious and ridiculous.

Get this thought. Rex fur is not like any other fur. It is absolutely unique among furs produced by all kinds of animals. It is a thing apart and sufficient unto itself. It does not need to lean on any other fur or attempt to borrow similarity either of name, quality or price. Rex fur is not an imitation or "copy-cat" of ermine or seal or skunk or any other fur. It is Rex rabbit fur and every animal that bears it is a Rex rabbit, not a hybrid of something else and Rex.

Every pink-eyed white Rex rabbit is an Albinorex. To call a cow a horse does not make it so. To call an Albinorex an Erminorex or a New Zealand White Rex or a Polish Rex or any other name does not make it so. It is still an Albinorex. The political position of a man who misnames it, and the honesty of those who call it something else, make not one whit of difference in the animal itself.

Now there may be political or organization reasons for splitting up the Albinorex variety into half a dozen or so sub-varieties. Some small group of individuals may benefit or even profit through such a split-up. But what has that to do with the matter? Are the breeders of pink-eyed white Rex rabbits, all over the United States, going to permit their variety to be butchered for the benefit of a few? The best thing for the Albinorex variety and for the progress of commercial rabbit culture is to simplify and unify the variety, and to keep it within the bounds of its genetical limits.

When all is said and done, Albinorex is simply a color variety of the Rex breed. It should be nurtured in a manner similar to all other color varieties. Albinorex should be of the same standardized weights and proportions as Blackrex, Brownrex, Chinrex, and other colors and patterns.

The standard of perfection for the Rex breed, as



adopted by the Rex Rabbit Federation, states that all Rex shall be bred to the same proportions, irrespective of color. There's sense to that, isn't there? It really standardizes. Rex of any color may be bred under the standard in two weight classes, as follows: "lightweight" class, to include specimens weighing from  $5\frac{1}{2}$  to  $7\frac{1}{2}$  pounds at full maturity, and "heavyweight" class consisting of rabbits weighing from 8 to 11 pounds. In the "lightweight" class, a rabbit with short neck and broad hips and shoulders is desired. The over-all length (from base of tail to tip of nose) should be approximately two inches per pound of the rabbit's weight. Thus a 6 pound rabbit should measure 12 inches and a 7 pound one 14 inches from nose to tail. These proportions insure a carcass well suited for the meat trade and one containing little waste.

In the "heavyweight" class, the standard calls for a heavily-boned rabbit with a thick, broad, massive body, arched slightly at the hips. A large frame is desired in a heavy rabbit, and Albinorex or any other color variety weighing upwards of 11 pounds should be bred for bulk of both body and bone. The typical "giant" type developed by fanciers raising extremely large rabbits for show purposes is not required in the "heavyweight" Rex. The decidedly arched back of the "giant" and its great body length are necessary in a specimen weighing more than 16 pounds. But an 8 to 11 pound rabbit may be more closely coupled and have a flatter back.

It is neither necessary nor desirable to cross-breed Albinorex with any of the pink-eyed white varieties of common rabbits, in order to evoke changes in body proportions. Living specimens, in both the lightweight and heavyweight classes, show tendencies indicating the production of properly proportioned rabbits within a few generations without resorting to out-crossing. In fact, a rather large percentage of our best-furred Rex of today come well within the limits of the standard set by the Rex Rabbit Federation.

In addition to establishing the two weight classes as stated above, the standard requires that every Rex shall be of sound health, alert and robust in appearance. That it shall be well rounded-out but not fat to the extent of flabbiness, and that the fur shall be firm and glossy. As to fur structure, every Rex shall be very densely furred over the entire body, legs and feet. The underfur shall be very soft, without wooliness, and shall be upstanding. The pelt shall be entirely devoid of protruding hairs and no hair shall be more than one inch long. The fur shall be of uniform density and length on the shoulders, back, hips and sides.

Cuts are designated for moult and looseness of fur, for a broken tooth or toe-nail, for an unpigmented toe-nail on a rabbit of a colored variety, and for a bare spot on an uninfected hock. Each  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound of overweight or underweight earns a cut of one point. Faulty tail carriage earns a cut of from 1 to 3 points.

Any of the following serve to disqualify a specimen for either exhibition or registration in the stud records of the Federation: Permanent or transitory illness or diseased condition. Blindness. Lop-ear. Abnormality resulting from injury, infection, illness or disease.

Crooked foot or leg. Wry, screw or bob-tail. Infected hock. Total cuts amounting to 15 points.

For the Albinorex and other self-colored varieties (rabbits that are the same color over their entire bodies and extremities, such as Brownrex, Non-albino Whiterex, Blackrex, etc.) scoring by points is as follows: Fur structure, 40 points; Fur color, 35 points; Condition, 15 points; Proportions, 10 points.

Now that this standard is officially in force—a single standard, covering all color varieties of the Rex breed—unifying them and standardizing them as a unit—Rex breeders may proceed with confidence to breed for fur quality, quick priming and milk production and to build up strains of Rex in any color that will be sources of profit to them. He need not worry about the Federation standard being changed from year to year, to keep step with the gropings of breeders who slowly realize one mistake after another which they have made. The attitude of the Rex Rabbit Federation toward the Rex breed is based squarely upon the genetical limitations of the Rex mutation. And that attitude has not changed one iota since the Federation was organized, three years ago. The Rex mutation has not changed since Rex Rabbits were first offered for sale, and until it does change there will be no need to make basic changes in the standard. No amount of pattering and passing of resolutions is going to change the Rex mutation. All rabbits having the Rex fur structure belong to the same breed—the Rex breed—and the Rex Rabbit Federation will continue to consider the breed as a unit.

Any other attitude toward the Rex mutation and the Rex breed is a hazardous and speculative one. The use of such an unscientific and unnecessary name as New Zealand White Rex or White Flemish Rex invites the cross-breeding of Rex with common rabbits, in a commercially needless attempt to modify body proportions. Cross-breeding is detrimental to Rex fur density and texture in nearly every instance. It is an unprofitable experiment. Why perform it? We need better Rex, and the way to get them is to select among the offspring of pure-breeding Rex now living.

Every pink-eyed white Rex rabbit is, genetically, an Albinorex. Properly bred, they are beautiful and valuable fur rabbits. Why attempt to masquerade the variety under one or a dozen other names? Why breed it in more than two weight classes? Why have half a dozen standards when one is ample? Why should it be of any different size or proportions than Rex of any other color? Think, you Rex breeders. Think, and act. Before it is too late to correct a flagrant and needless error, let's get together and save the Albinorex variety from useless promotion, profiteering and butchery. Let's admit the undeniable truth that all red or pink-eyed white Rex are Albinorex. Let's enter them at shows as such, and under no other name. Let's sell them as such and register them as such, under the standard for the Rex breed. Let's all stop using the meaningless other names and stop confusing buyers of breeding stock. Let's unify our conception of the variety and keep it within its genetical limits, and make it one of the most profitable varieties of fur animals living.

This is an important matter. It should not be side-



stepped or evaded. Sooner or later every breeder of Rex is going to have to answer it for himself. Procrastination is not the road to progress. It is the road to ruin. Answer the Albinorex question in your own mind right now. Are you for it or against it?

Or, better yet, write out your views on the subject and submit them to this magazine for publication. The entire membership of the Rex Federation is in favor of Albinorex and no other name for every pink-eyed white Rex rabbit. How do you feel about it?

## Taking Care of the Breeding Does

### *A Few Hints for Those Who Have Trouble in Making Their Does Breed — Care of the Doe With Litter — When Weaning Should be Done — Re-breeding the Doe*

By E. E. JONES

THE "Care of the Breeding Does" is something which should be of interest to everyone, especially to the beginner. Many times the beginner has been advised to start with good stock and receives no further advice. Regardless of how good the stock may be, if it does not receive proper attention it cannot and will not produce as well as if properly cared for. Every rabbit must be given the best possible in housing and feed to return the greatest profit in meat and fur, and also to produce breeding stock for its owner. This is the end every breeder is working toward; therefore, care is the one main thing in achieving success.

Taking things for granted, that a start in the rabbit industry has been made with good breeding stock, the beginner should first learn the correct way to handle his stock. Pick them up by the ears? No, certainly not! Only a short time ago good friend of mine purchased a trio of fine New Zealand Reds. The two does were bred and due to kindle. They kindled but most of the young were dead. When the owner explained how he picked the large does up by the ears and moved them from hutch to butch, and how they "kicked like mules" is it any wonder the young were born dead? May I add here that this good Scotchman is just another one who had the rabbit industry MISREPRESENTED to him and is a knocker instead of a booster. Boys, if we can't be truthful in our representations to beginners, why not quit?

Well I had about forgotten to tell how to properly pick the rabbit up. Grasp the loose fur just back of the neck by one hand and then raise the rabbit up easy and place the other hand and arm under its body bringing the rabbit up close to you. Never allow the rabbit to just "kick it out." You are not only protecting yourself from scratches but also handling the rabbit properly when handled in this manner. The does should not be moved any more than is absolutely necessary after they are bred; however, if necessary use every precaution in handling so as to not injured or excite her unduly.

I believe that improper handling of rabbits by their ears causes more lop and lazy ears than any other one thing. Learn how to handle them and then practice it.

The breeding of a does is very important and many pages could be written explaining many features about it; however, as this is impossible I will give briefly some points. First be sure the doe is of proper age to breed and is in a healthy condition. Usually the

correct age is from six to ten months old depending upon the breed or the individual rabbit. One is safe in breeding does when they are up to the standard in weight. That is, if the standard weight for your particular breed is seven pounds at maturity, it is safe to breed the does when they reach this weight. If the standard weight is ten pounds, do not breed until they weigh ten pounds. If the does cannot make standard weight or above, the best thing to do is butcher them for only by breeding bigger and better rabbits can you improve your herd. It is very important that only stock making standard weights and above be used as breeders.

When breeding a doe always take her to the buck's hutch. If she is willing to breed she will breed at once, and if she does not accept the buck she should be removed in four or five minutes. Never leave the buck and doe together over five minutes and always watch them while mating. If the doe refuses to breed the first time, try again the next day. Usually she will breed the second or third day but not always. If you have a doe which refuses to breed there may be one of several things causing the trouble. Probably the doe is too fat. If this is the cause place her in a large hutch where she will have ample room for exercising and reduce her feed. Many times does are too old to be profitable breeders are kept and trouble is had in getting them to breed. When does pass the age of four years they will not produce as well and should be replaced by young does. I am not saying that when a doe reaches four years of age she will not raise young and if she is a valuable animal it is advisable to keep her as a breeder as long as possible. Sometimes by placing stubborn does on the ground they will come in heat and breed without further trouble. Another plan is to place a few bucks not old enough to serve the doe in the hutch with her. Leave them together for a few days. Remove the bucks and then try breeding the doe. Never kill a doe when she refuses to breed until you are certain the cause is with the rabbit and not you. However, a few does do fail to breed and if you have one of these butcher her and replace by one that will breed. No profit can be made by keeping stock that fails to produce young. When mating stock be certain that both doe and buck are in good condition. If either is in poor condition the best of youngsters need not be expected. It is advisable to keep more than one stud

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